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ABSTRACT

A dark side of modernization parallels the numerous and obvious positive social impacts. Current social, political, economic, and ecological plights have been viewed as manifestations of a broader cultural crisis caused by adherence to a "reductionist" approach to reality. Reality, indeed, can only be understood in terms of process and dynamic relations among the parts. Some businesses apply these "holistic" notions in business communication and management and provide illustrations of cooperation through interpersonal communication. The public educational system is not geared to the reality of this paradigm shift. Education does not permit learning about interpersonal questions and those life subjects that are the dominating themes of media. The resultant uncertainty increases the stress on individuals existing in a stressful environment. Traditional educational systems teach individuals to avoid the emotional encounters and survival connections of life that do need most to be examined. By neglecting to provide a living relevant education to children, the educational system causes boredom and distaste for further scholarship. (Attachments, amounting to over one-half of the paper, are various pieces on education, selected poems, and questions and answers.) (YLB)

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SIDE WALKS IN EDUCATION *

socio-philosophical commentary by

Alex Gerber, Jr.

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National Institute for the Advancement of Career Education
University of Southern California
University Park -- MC 0031
Los Angeles, California 90089
(213) 743-4424

Alex Gerber, Jr.
Sidewalk Lyrics Co.
P.O. Box 1022
South Pasadena, Ca. 91030
(213) 281-5148

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INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND THE DIGITAL SOCIETY

"I point out to you, Marcus Clair Luyseyal, a lesson from past over-machined societies which you appear not to have learned. The devices themselves condition the users to employ each other the way they employ machines."

--Leto II

God Emperor Of Dune
by Frank Herbert

Due to the irrational state of the world today, there is a question--one receiving increasingly widespread attention--of whether or not we can expect that modern technology will endure, or disappear along with humanity.

In a recent interview, R. Buckminster Fuller was commenting upon some of the growing dangers to humanity, such as dirty air, polluted water, and a growing cancer rate. He said that "we are at a point of no return on one item after another," and that we have about eight years in which to change our thinking--what we do in these years will determine whether or not we destroy ourselves or create our own utopia. Fuller says that nature is trying very hard to make us a success in the universe and that our salvation lies, not in politics, but in the proper application of technology. Technology and resources exist which would enable all of humanity to live at a higher standard of living than anyone has ever known.[1]

But more than just technology, a certain quality of communication and understanding is also required. This paper will present a philosophical/sociological examination suggested by the title and above remarks. For these purposes, "interpersonal communication" is defined as communication between people not necessarily in physical, but necessarily in "emotional," proximity. The rationale behind this will become apparent.

There are many praiseworthy aspects of modernization. However, as University of California at Berkeley physicist Fritjof Capra points out (along with many others), there has been a "dark side of growth."[2] This paper will not emphasize the numerous and obvious positive social impacts of the increasing capacities of electronic servo-mechanisms, rather it will focus on the "dark side" and, hopefully, provoke thought.

For philosophical purposes, the following (not necessarily linearly-associated) intertwining relationships will be explored: 1) changes in the prevailing world-view, or paradigm, of "reality," 2) the current state of our educational system vis-à-vis "reality," 3) some psychological/sociological aspects of the new high-tech communications technologies, and 4) humanity's relative awareness of her own collective consciousness and future. "Interpersonal communication" will provide the framework.

According to Fritjof Capra, our current social, political, economic, and ecological plights are all manifestations of what he describes as a broader cultural crisis brought about by adherence to outdated conceptual models.[3] He urges us to abandon the Cartesian-Newtonian "reductionist" approach[4] to reality and uses recent discoveries in quantum physics to show that "reality" can indeed only be understood in terms of process and dynamic realtions among the parts. He demonstrates that all phenomena are determined in their connections to the whole--indeed, that at the sub-atomic level, matter itself is "fluid"

and is in fact inextricably interwoven with and embedded in consciousness itself.[5]

So, Capra says, now that further study in the "hardest" of all sciences (physics) has revealed that it can only be understood in terms of its interrelated systems--thus transcending the seventeenth-century reductionist views of Descartes and Newton--and given that this now-transcended paradigm is the one around which our Western social and medical sciences have subsequently evolved, we must now likewise perceive the validity of the holistic approach in the humanities as well. In fact, dealing with the "sciences" and "humanities" themselves as "separate areas of discipline" has lost its former relevance.[6] Capra is careful not to invalidate Cartesian reductionism, but simply says that the parameters of its usefulness do not encompass the total picture in any domain of inquiry.

Capra's, Fuller's, and other's investigations show scientifically what many people know intuitively: the "hard" path of "domination over nature"--based as it is on premises about scarcity and a closed-systems view of the world--has been outmoded.[7,8]

What these remarks have to do with various social impacts of the "digital age" (e.g. of the new communication technologies) on interpersonal communication and beliefs--<u>and the reverse of this</u>--we shall soon see. First, however, a few more examples of "holistic thinking" in different contexts.

Biologist Lewis Thomas's understandings in biology parallel those of Capra's in physics with respect to the

paradigm shift described above--which is to say, they are the same understandings. Thomas's holistic view of the Earth is powerfully and poetically reflected in his statement that "it is most like a single cell."[9]

Likewise, E.F. Schumacher, in Small Is Beautiful, applies these "organic" and non-linear understandings to the field of economics.[10]

Some corporations have programs which apply these "holistic" notions in the areas of business communication and management. For instance, the Sperry Corporation (makers of Sperry Univac computers among other products) has run a series of double-page ads in several national magazines promoting to the public that they have interpersonal communication programs for their staff. One of the ads begins with bold letters across two pages which read: "KNOWING HOW TO LISTEN COULD DOUBLE THE EFFICIENCY OF AMERICAN BUSINESS. DO YOU HEAR THAT?" Part of the underlying text reads:

> Employees feel more and more distant, and ultimately alienated from top management. Well, as one of the world's largest corporations--with 87,000 employees and five divisions--we at Sperry simply can't afford to pay the price of poor listening. So we've set up extensive listening programs that Sperry personnel throughout the world can take part in. From sales representatives to computer engineers to the Chairman of the Board. These programs are making us a lot better at listening to each other. And when you do businesss with Sperry Univac, or any of our other divisions, you'll discover that they're making us a lot better at listening to you. We understand how important it is to listen.[11]

In another recent news article, it was reported that the management of Delta Airlines, which earned more profit than any other airline in 1980 (other large airlines, such as American,

suffered heavy losses), attributes Delta's success largely to longstanding efforts to improve worker productivity through employee-management involvement. These include an extensive "open door" policy to hear worker suggestions and grievances.[12]

The above two examples--and there are many more--of a style of business management which includes "humanism" are really only logical when "gestalt" is considered in this context. We have here an illustration of the "soft path" of co-operation (the "scientific" rationale and framework for which is provided by Capra, among others) finding its expression in the corporate world through "interpersonal communication." If "the soul of business is business," and "humanism" manifests at the bottom line, holism, by definition, reveals how.

That these realizations are educative brings the current state of our educational system into the discussion. Our public (and perhaps private) educational system is not geared to the reality of the paradigm shift described above.

Not only has our educational system remained largely unchanged, a failure in itself, it is also a vehicle we depend on to bring us awareness of change. It is therefore doubly liable.[13] Since the paradigm shift is factual and so basic, and we are not broadly informed on the matter, our educational systems and avenues have not been equipping people with the relevant--at least in the above respect.

Life demands that we are "educated" (knowledgable) in some basic notions which are common to all people, yet which are

either "taboo" or otherwise absent in our educative surroundings. Our culture doesn't allow discussion of some of the complex and controversial areas basic to one's own survival in the present. Note that in "real life" it's the "interpersonal" questions and situations regarding values, religion, politics, family, divorce, sex, money, competition, that are the most relevant and demand the most expertise.

But our education, in general (and traditionally), does not permit learning that there are major questions and "paradigms" of life to consider or what some of these might be. One doesn't learn about politics, religion, or sex (that is, on a macrocosmic and comprehensive scale) because, we are told, we can't be political, religious, or sexual in school. For example, in school we may "learn about" various political parties and systems. In some "progressive" classrooms students may even delve into some of the more "radical" or "relevant" notions (compared to studying politics from a traditional textbook). But, that we must be nationalized and politicized, or that we must sit in rows to learn in the first place, is rarely questioned, and should be.[14] True education is those tools and "construct"-tion blocks themselves exposed. An analogy would be the magician forthrightly and slowly unfolding his tricks of illusion.

Not only in "real life," the dominating themes of media (particularly T.V.--a "fact of life") are violence, politics, religious themes, competition/survival/power themes, sexual themes, pleasure/hedonistic themes, and financial themes. And we must include commercials--state-of-the-art consumer psychology

coupled with modern production techniques--in considering both the quantity and quality of the impact (and interaction with our lives) of these. So the situation is that the very "themes" which ARE the everyday woof and warp of life itself, and which are perceived as dramatized simulations in vast quantity through our daily media, are not transmitted to children AS SUCH (that is, for their contemplation). The result is a "gap of uncertainty" in these "life subjects" themselves, which is exacerbated by constant restimulation of these same areas by the media. In turn, political, economic, merchandising, etc. (i.e. psychological) ploys find easy, actually defenseless, prey. That this is indeed the case is obvious everywhere. Extended to a macroscopic (societal) scale (employing the logic that society is comprised of individuals), this "gap of uncertainty" becomes a "collective ['em-ploy-able'] consciousness" (or rather, "unconsciousness") out of which emerge national leaders who are not leading us toward greater possibilities for life.

Now we are beginning to weave "some socio-psychological aspects" and "humanity's relative awareness" (reference to page 2) into the discussion. The stress on individuals becomes twofold. The environment itself is a stressful place for an increasing number of people these days. In addition, through the constant whetting of the collective desire for "certainty" and "fulfillment" (by media, particularly T.V., movies, some music, and advertising) of the "areas of uncertainty" in society, the stress is magnified and becomes institutionalized due to the constant restimulations. These concepts become basic to phil-

osophical discussions about "what to do."

Despite areas in which obvious advances are being made, such as in the communications field, everyday stresses and strains on people, in general, are increasing. This is reflected in part by increasing rates of violence, divorce, and mental illness. Therefore, along with the digital age and its conveniences, we must address psychological effects/impacts/interactions as well.

In the above, lies an explanation for the declining support for public education in this country, and increasing support for private education, and more particularly the rapidly increasing numbers of people who "belong" to one or more of the "alternative" (outside of traditional academic frameworks) self-help/communication/education groups. There are literally hundreds of such groups in the L.A. area alone, many with national and international organizations or franchises. A glance at the "L.A. Light Directory," the Sunday Calendar section of the L.A. Times, or the classified section of the L.A. Weekly will confirm these statements. Many seem to offer spiritual dimension.

Leaving aside the obvious financial and political issues surrounding portions of the "spiritual marketplace," one glaringly obvious and powerful common denominator of the "new religions" or alternative therapies is that invariably they all provide, in some form, "someone to listen to your story."

People have their "own story" that has "never been told"--

apparently neither to parents nor teachers--and this "incomplete communication" has profound psychological impact, as evinced (in part) by the popularity of the "therapy ('We Listen!') movement" itself.

Here is where prevailing world-views, education, communication technologies, and "humanity-wide awareness" are all found to interface, at least for the purpose of this paper, with interpersonal communication.

The communication technologies all have to do with perception, for example, of data. But it seems that either the data sources themselves--or accurately perceiving them--is a problem: Humanity has failed to establish the needed (for our own continued survival) viable global consensus or framework with which to effectively begin to reverse some of the more dangerous trends (with respect to the survival of our biosphere itself--such as in plutonium waste management, acid rain, nuclear proliferation, and others).

Perhaps the missing catalyst is the notion of interpersonal communication. Rollo May, the noted psychoanalyst and author, writes that "It is a world in which, amid all the vastly developed means of communication that bombard us on all sides, actual personal communication is exceedingly difficult and rare."[15] Dr. May writes that men and women find themselves increasingly alone in a world in which the person him- or herself "...is never known."[16] Yet we are literally surrounded and besieged by "people information" from all quarters.

That a condition of "disconnection" exists in individuals is evidenced in the following examples, which bring to the perspective of this paper some social/psychological relationships of the "communications age"--as distinguished from a possible and necessary "interpersonal communications age."

Consider, for example, the audio of video games, whether in the arcade or home. It's a vast array of electronically simulated explosions and zap-rays--a digital carry-over from the "pow" and "blam" of our traditional Saturday morning cartoons. The children are exposed to explosions on the T.V. news, in much of the music, and in their games. Advanced psychology is not required to realize that what is reinforced is propagated.

Another example of a side-effect/symptom of the digital age is slam-dancing. Slam-dancing has been in the punk rock clubs for several years,[17] but more recently a popularized version of slam-dancing has appeared. If ever a popular activity reflected the greater societal milieu, including the isolation referred to by Rollo May, slam-dancing is an utterly mechanical "digitized kinesthetic" mirroring surrounding realities. Or...a philosophical/psychological/monotonal program simultaneously transposed onto a physical/tactile shift register... And it's done alone--on crowded dance floors.

Likewise, if we look at the popularity of Pac-Man as symptomatic of our age, one is apt to conclude that it, too, is another digital simulation of what it's like to be alive in many, if not most respects (perhaps particularly for our children). Another factor for consideration in this regard

is the vast appeal (and "media event") of female mud-wrestling, where one is an isolated and paying spectator of intimate human contact. Also, the recent T.V. ads for Intellivision's version of video football come to mind: "Intellivision football--closest thing to the real thing!"

In another illustration of rampant irrelevance and disconnection (but extended to global realities and imperatives), Buckminster Fuller writes that "The computer will show that 70 percent of all jobs in America and probably an equivalently high percentage of the jobs in other Western private-enterprise countries are pre-occupied with work that is not producing any wealth or life-support--inspectors of inspectors, reunderwriters of insurance reinsurers, Obnoxico promoters, spies and counter-spies, military personnel, gunmakers, etc."[18]

In our traditional educational systems, we are expressly taught to keep away from the very "meaningful thematics" which are the emotional encounters and survival connections of life, and which, apparently, we most need to examine. Contrary to the paradigm arising from modern physics, our educational system (generally) still perceives social studies, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, economics, sociology, education, ecology, political science, health, and therapy as "separate disciplines." The "gestalt"--which <u>is</u> life itself--is left unidentified and unaddressed as such.[19]

For example, the above analysis loses meaning if we try to separate its "sociology" from its "psychology" or its

political implications, etc. The importance of Capra's work is that he gives the objectively verified rationale--along with that provided by history or by knowing--that for any practical or possible applicability of any of these "disciplines" to ensue, their mutual underpinnings and overlappings would have to be acknowledged. "Solely economic measures" never are. Physics is demonstrating this as it is objectively defining holism. The "new" subject is "Nature - Humanity."[20]

Again regarding the relative effectiveness and relevance of our educational systems--and by way of further illustrating some of the above concepts from along yet another vector--how have the graduates of the high school Class of '82 learned to survive? For example, can she or he recognize when water is safe to drink? Both in the professional literature and in our own neighborhoods is found evidence supporting the notion that water-purity expertise is basic education, or should be.[21] Does anyone in the Class of '82 recognize that provenly harmful environmental trends are being reinforced by official policies?[22] Does anyone know how to survive for a month, find water, or grow food? Even "uncivilized" (much less "educated") tribal people know.

Late at night on T.V. we hear "be earthquake aware" warnings. These announcements, along with other obvious indicators, lead one to feel that some of the abilities mentioned above could indeed be considered basic to "being educated"

these days. But the cultural disposition in our society is such that one is not taught how to go out into the woods and find food, or that it is even possible, or that it may be essential knowledge. One is not taught that we face serious water problems in this country, or that it is possible (and increasingly necessary, due to pollution and "shortage") for every house to have a cistern and filter for rainwater. Or, that in Sacramento and across the nation, when the big politics dictate how things are to be built, and to what specifications, they are not drafting policies to help make the public independent of its troubles, or even aware of them.

In fact, some of the notions and skills basic to life have become esoteric knowledge. It has become an esoteric subject to locate or provide for oneself basic commodities such as food and water, which are everywhere.

Nowadays, in a paralleling illustration, only wealthy people can afford to eat organically grown food (no poison) or go to natural healers and partake of natural health remedies outside of Medicare or Blue Cross and institutional medicine. The vernacular remedies have become luxuries![23] Gold could be visible in a bucket of dirt, but a doctorate in metallurgy or mining engineering is required to use it.

The point is, many of our most advanced institutions have become self-defeating. The educational system, for instance, through lack of providing a living, relevant education to children, causes boredom and distaste for further scholarship. Similarily, our hospitals, though highly technological, have

become largely impersonal, yet the "systems view" of illness mandates that the personal approach is the healthiest.[24]

Technology is certainly not necessarily juxtaposed to humanization. Indeed, as Servan-Schreiber[25] and others have shown, the microchip revolution has the potential of being the vehicle with which the developing countries can leapfrog into the post-industrial age. The critical factor of course--humanization, or perhaps "humanity-ization"--both depends upon and determines what is transmitted through that "circle of glass." Here is where motive, or intentionality--thus values and education--comes into play.

Interpersonal communication unlocks it all. "Real" education (what is needed now) as well as "real" communication, to be genuine, must be both interpersonal and relevant. Without these elements, neither the education nor the communication is "alive." Education needs the "meaningful thematics," and that "passion" (always present in those real and memorable encounters in life), to be attractive. It's that <u>emotional</u> <u>connection</u> that IS "real life". It needs to be present in education/communication. It <u>makes</u> "holistic"--even in quantum physics.

We live in a "digital age." If we continue to "make the machines as human as possible"--that is, "user friendly"--part of that research effort should certainly be to expand the parameters of the "...as human..." even as we're in the process of defining the "...as possible" for the machines. In other

words, we're technologizing the computers towards "being more human," so let's not leave our definition and conception of "human" to "tacit understanding." It cannot be said to have worked.

In defining our humanity, we have marvelous tools to use. Computing machines, unlike humans, have no will to determine to what ends we employ them. The "pathways of light" in modern games and communications are subtle manifestations. They can be regarded various ways. C.S. Lewis had no computer display when he wrote

> ...light is on the edge--
> the last thing we know
> before things become too
> swift for us.

The technology of games and communication encompasses another dimension of light, and despite its enthralling fascination and possible benefits, should not be confused with the real thing.

NOTES

1. Fuller was interviewed on the CBS program "Two On The Town" on June 25, 1982.

2. See Capra, (1982). Ch. 8. In this chapter Capra writes about the harmful by-products of expansion such as toxic wastes and their effects, etc.

3. See Capra (1975, 1982).

4. Reductionism is the conception of reality which holds that matter is the basis of all existence and that the material world is composed of a multitude of separate objects assembled into a huge machine. It believes that complex phenonema can always be understood by reducing them to their basic building blocks. See Capra (1982), p. 47.

5. Capra (1982), Ch. 3. Basically, Capra's thesis in The Turning Point is that society is undergoing a fundamental paradigm shift away from traditionally "masculine" (yang) values towards a balance with traditionally "feminine" (yin) values, for example from aggressive to more responsive, competitive to more cooperative, rational to more intuitive, and analytic to synthesizing (p. 38). (A word regarding the use of the terms yin and yang above: Capra believes that the nomenclature of Chinese philosophy accurately reflects the reality that has emerged from modern physics. The terms yin and yang refer to scientific/philosophical principles of mutual interaction.) In quantum physics it is a shift from the static Cartesian view to the viewing of the relationships and interactions of systems, from purely quantitative to more qualitative. The evidence of modern physics both heralds and reflects the validity of the paradigm shift.

6. Capra (1982), Ch. 9.

7. The term "systems view" generally refers to the realization of the validity of the openendedness of systems. In general the terms "systems view," "organic view," or "holistic approach" all convey the same general concept. The image of nature changed from organism to machine with the advent of the Cartesian-paradigm and along with it the value system changed from one conducive to ecological behavior to one conducive to scientific/mechanistic domination of nature. Capra (1982), p. 61.

   Capra writes that the systems view of life is "...based on awareness of the essential interrelatedness and

interdependence of all phenomena--physical, biological, psychological, social, and cultural." p. 265.

8. One of Fuller's comments in the recent T.V. interview (see Note 1.) strikingly illustrates the magnitude of "soft" and "no scarcity": that our overall daily energy consumption of earth [food, fuel, etc.] is twelve-billionths of 1% of earth's daily energy income from the sun, wind, and movement of water.

9. See Thomas (1974).

10. See Schumacher (1973).

11. The New Yorker magazine, March 23, 1981.

12. Article titled "New airlines give big carriers a run for their money" in The Christian Science Monitor, July 2, 1981.

13. See Williams (1982), Ch. 17. To illustrate the unchanging nature of the technological environment at school (as compared with, for example, a physician's office or an airplane), Dr. Williams compares a back-to-school-night of the present with one of 20-30 years ago; what is observed is remarkably the same: "...their assembly line instruction and even their bells are a holdover from the industrial age of our country..." (pp. 215-216). A similar case can be made about the curriculum, as we shall see.

14. See Fuller (1981).

15. See May (1969).

16. May (1969), p. 160.

17. Penelope Spheeris's acclaimed documentary film "The Rise and Fall of Western Civilization" allows one to observe slam-dancing from a more detached perspective.

18. See Fuller (1981), p. xxxiv. For the definition of "Obnoxico," see p. 226. He includes such items as "acrylic toilet seats with dollar bills cast in the transparent plastic material, two teddy bears hugging an alligator, etc." Also such things as plastic flowers or plastic pebbles for your garden walk. He says, "Private enterprise is now building airports with ever-longer walkways and hotels with ever-increasing numbers of levels of ground-floor and basement arcades to accommodate the ever-more-swiftly multiplying Obnoxico stores."

19. See Freire (1981), p. 95 and Capra (1982).

20. The "Nature - Humanity" curriculum is defined and elaborated upon in another chapter.

21. See, for example, the article entitled "Liquid Life: The Water Beneath Us" by John Boykin, The Stanford Magazine, Vol. 10, No. 1, Spring 1982. Also it is well known, for another example, that for a time in the San Gabriel Valley last year numerous wells were contaminated. Many other examples could be cited in support of the notion that "water-education" is valuable.

22. It is well beyond the scope of this paper, but evidence supporting this statement can be found in any newspaper. For instance, it was recently reported that federal sulfur emission requirements have been relaxed (factor in acid rain).

23. See Illich (1981).

24. The moves by some medical schools towards adopting nutrition education reflects successful application at the "alternative" or grass roots level. The medical establishment is slowly discovering what some "holistic practitioners" know about nutrition and natural remedies, just as modern physics is illuminating the objective validity of holism, which is an ancient concept.

25. See Servan-Schreiber (1980).

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SIDE WALKS IN EDUCATION

Addressing specific issues has not cured our educational ills. Various studies can be cited in support of any viewpoint or theory, but the ideas of what constitutes the "best model" for education (or society) are conflicting. Even--or perhaps especially--the "experts" disagree. Our society has fragmentized over many issues.

It is the lack of a common base of perception that results in such fragmentation. It is this lack of unity that has also resulted in the destruction or erosion of our societal institutions and planetary ecological system. There is not even a common consensus on the urgency for common consensus as a basis for change. And is not the only unifying consensus possible--in this age of space travel, instant global communication and warfare, and internationally overlapping ecological situations--the idea of humanity and the planet as the unity itself? Must we not begin to transmit these ideas in some form to our youth?

Emphasizing only the tangible and quantitatively measureable has resulted in our current plight. The Neo Education is not about issues, curriculum, or method. It is, firstly, attitudinal orientation.

Understanding may be all we can do. Understanding is also the first ingredient for precipitating change.

When an understanding of old principles is present, then how best to resolve the individual issues (which are the overlying symptoms) is self-evident--that is, evident to all. A tangible harmony can ensue. Specific classroom problems, such as lack of interest or discipline, seem to vanish (as many classroom teachers can tell you). It's the emotional connection--the affective domain--which is the most important in education.

Nature nourishes her own. Through observation we see that each entity in nature invariably responds to certain of her visible laws or principles. Give a tree the required amount of water and sunlight and it thrives. Too much or too little and it perishes. (The amount and the details vary between and within species in nature.)

Humans thrive or perish by equally simple laws--the same ones, for we too are of this selfsame nature. The living eco-system which is the planet itself also operates this way, as does a marriage or a classroom of individuals.

Common sense is telling us that education must include . . . cultivation of factors and impulses which are in alignment with the pattern of nature, and which are creating awareness that the principle of and necessity for unity is the one most begging for understanding and application in the world today.

For we live in the Global Age now.

EVERY SHOT IS AN EASY SHOT

A "dynamic principle" could be defined as a principle that, when applied, leads to a spontaneous expansion or improvement in the field or activity being addressed.

For example, in the sport of tennis, "every shot is an easy shot" is a "dynamic" principle. That is, from beginner to expert, if one's operating paradigm or mental attitude is such that "every shot is an easy shot," one's game will improve "dynamically," because shots of ever increasing difficulty remain "easy," whereas in fact they are getting more difficult.

A logical extension of this principle, although the logic could be held to be non-linear, leads to the Principle of Dynamic Education. Dynamic education is defined as <u>any education that leads the learner to desire more of it, to choose to explore the subject or event more deeply, without any outside persuasion</u>.

If education is "dynamic" as defined above, it will spontaneously lead one to ever increasing awareness and expertise in the chosen area (because self-generated enthusiasm sustains the inquiry) just as it enables the tennis player to handle "with ease" increasingly more difficult shots.

Of course one could argue that dynamic education could apply, for example, to the study of biological warfare. Thus values and cultural milieu come into play.

GETTING SOAKED

If, in a washing machine, the clothes become too unbalanced (unevenly distributed), instead of spinning, the machine stops itself and a buzzer sounds.

It is the same with life. "Buzzers" are everywhere in evidence and do emit warnings of imbalance. Once a buzzer sounds, the only way the cycle can be resumed is through rebalance.

Otherwise everything continues to soak indefinately.

THE GOAL

The goal of education is having the student, by choice, striving to optimize her or his faculties and capacities.

Here are some related dynamic principles: Lack of duress allows education to become self-empowering. Differences are required for individuals. Education draws out what it assumes of human nature.

WHAT TO DO

Be led by what follows.

This is a dynamic principle.

AN INTRODUCTION

The opposite of holistic education is brainwashing.

PAC-MAN

There's no mystery why it's so popular.

It's a digital simulation of what it's like to be alive (chasing things that move and avoiding other things that move).

Now there ought to be a video game where you walk in and blow up your own psychological stresses, however there is not. Besides, who would program it?

PROOF

The observed effects are the result of a system and mind set still in use. So, if we do not make some fundamental changes in the system and mind set, we will continue to observe the same effects. But we know by experience that any specific proposed changes in the system and mind set simply adds to the fragmentation already present, thus precluding the inception of the proposed changes and resulting changes in effect. Therefore, the only way we can actually achieve change toward desired effects would be to make the proposed changes themselves ones which provide for the preclusion of the inevitable fragmentation generated by the proposal.

Only changes which benefit all humankind--our only true unity--meet this criterion.

Disagreement with this proves it.

HOW TO STOP THE TRAIN
(from crushing the child)

In view of current affairs, it is imperative to stop the train.

People know how to stop the speeding train of course, yet it is plain that the train is not stopping. Perhaps the simplicity has become obscured.

"To stop the train, be the train and . . . stop!"

This is simple because we are the train.

PLANETS

Be the planet and diagnose yourself.

To heal, do for yourself what you would do if you were the planet.

This is simple because we are the planet.

HOW TO GET AN A+

By all means inform students.

"Don't seek approval."

It comes from not ever having it or from once having it doled out by condition/response/reward.

Everyone already "approves" of your living if you do.

Self-assignment is your grading.

SELECTED POEMS

It used the.
The used it.
It jumped away
Didn't get hit.
The went after
In a fit
It came back
The used it.

What is it all about?
Is it about talking about?
"What is it all about?"
Is about what it's about.

Talking about talking about
In circles and clothes
Talking about what it's about
The hour grows.

carcinogenic roses
unfortunate for noses
such pessimistic poses
scene closes

Or did it RAI,'N?

I cracked the
cosmic egg &
found another
egg. It
crashed, revealing
another, larger
egg, inside.

Big Business

days and nights of walnut walls
creamy foods and mining,
of shipping mergers, oil pricing
shopping and more dining.
of pictures with presidents,
congressional honors and banks,
limos and boats
villas with moats
and tanks.

HOW I RAN IRAN

ONCE I RAN IRAN.
BUT HE RAN AGAINST HOW I RAN
AND HE RAN ME OUT.
I RAN.
BUT IRAN STILL RAN WITH ME
SO AS I RAN
I STILL RAN IRAN.
SINCE IRAN RAN AGAINST
THE WAY HE RAN AGAINST ME
AND RAN ME OUT OF IRAN,
IRAN RAN AFTER HIM.
AS HE RAN
I RAN BACK
AND RAN IRAN.

Idi Amin,
I mean
How have you been?
Remember the palace?
Crack us a grin.
How is your conscience?
Where does it begin?
I mean, Idi Amin
How have you been?

Shuttling

"Shuttle go up
Shuttle come down."
So what's the news

Here in Old-Town:
"Killing over colors"
(Choices abound--

Choose between white,
Red, black, yellow, or brown),
"Forgetting everything

Circles around"
(Shuttling up and
Shuttling down).

About The Spark

starship screams
tired themes
guru gleams
tantric beams
at you in the dark,

enemy spies
with face disguise
and shifty eyes
are acting wise
on benches in the park,

religions glitter
spaceships flitter
one's no-hitter
is another's quitter
neither hit the mark,

golden mean
never seen
only sheen
in between
meetings at the ark,

hearts' unrest
over stressed
final test
not in jest
be ready to embark,

clocks unwind
folks still blind
to the bind
of humankind
it's about the spark.

Trouble sleeping, man?
You say you got trouble speaking?
You been speakin' trouble, man,
You'll get sleeping trouble, man.

Trouble breathing?
You say you got trouble reaching?
You been reaching for trouble, man,
You'll get breathing trouble, man.

Trouble understanding, man?
You say you got trouble loving?
You've been loving trouble, man,
You'll not be understanding, then.

Trouble with your heart, man?
You say you've been feelin' bad?
You've caused some bad feelings, then,
And you'll have a troubled heart, man.

Hey, Ma

How do you turn off
the Car, Ma?

All It Took

Soup's on the shelf
My coat's on the hook
So why am I bleeding?
It's not soup I'm needing
Not a lecture, not a book
Maybe a gesture, maybe a look
A little love is all it took.

Lost Friend

A long lost friend just spoke to me.
She said, when you see what you see
And you hear what you hear,
When the fate of us all
Is what you hold dear,
Then, you pass through a portal
That you can't mistake,
Unless the gold shining everywhere
Is something you'd take.
She went on to tell me
In a voice with no hurry,
She said, take it as it comes
And you won't have to worry.
She said, turn into your heart.
Beat with the pulse of life.
All men are my brothers
So why all this strife?
It's really so simple,
It's right before your eyes.
It's in the eyes of your children,
Not clouded, not disguised.
It beats a path to your doorstep
Begging to not be turned away
Like some long lost friend
At the end of a long day.

Pasadena

We lift our voices to Pasadena
In song, we salute your crown and key
This crown of jewels, this key of gold
They speak of wonders to be told.
Flowering orange groves came before you
Pasadena - "valley in the hills"
Among the flowers is your crown and key
Waiting to be found by you and me.

The key is symbolic of your dreams
Cast in gold for everyone to see
Dreams are the key, creating what will be
Yesterday's dreams become today's reality.
The crown is your mark of royalty
The jewels, they shine for all your people
You're blessed with roses, beautiful name
And your people are your brightest flame.

APPENDIX

Q. What is "sidewalk philosophy of education"?

"The philosopher is in -- You." Generally, the education in schools brings people from one hierarchy to another, but still within the same framework. That is, children and adults are not becoming acquainted with the tools themselves with which to perceive the "construct"-tion of much of their lives. Education must enable people, conceptually, to find and explore "their own." Here we get into the "meaningful thematics" and "conscientization" of Freire (see Freire, 1979). Education, to be meaningful, must be both interpersonal and relevant. It's the emotional connection--the affective domain--which is the most important in education. These ideas of education-as-awareness-change (education for people) are embodied in the notion that "The philosopher is in -- You."

Q. Could you be more specific? For example, how does what you are saying align with the field of career education?

With "career," we're speaking of a human's career. It is interesting to note that the modern definition of "career" has come to mean a permanent profession or calling, whereas the word means "a course, a general course of action or movement." This definition is from a facsimile edition of Webster's Dictionary of 1828. The notion of job or profession is entirely absent. In Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, the "job" part of the definition is number 3. "Career" means "a course" [e.g. of a life]; "permanent profession" is a recent interpretation. These valid semantic considerations provide the logical linkage: Advancement of career education, by definition, once again returns us to the realization that "The philosopher is in -- You." Career: awareness of self: awareness of linkage between thought, and realities or circumstances: consideration of natural laws: discovery of holism--all equalling one's course... a general course of action or movement, or... "career." Bringing these ideas into awareness and focus is the "education" part. The "course" IS holism--"life."

Q. What are some of the important issues facing education in the 80's?

There are many issues to consider, for example, the decline in support for public education in this country, whether or not to support tuition tax credits or busing, or (in a

given classroom) whether or not "tracking"--the assignment to reading groups by establishing "levels"--should be employed, open or closed classrooms, etc. But historically, we can see that (the inevitable assuming of) a "for" or "against" stance on any given issue or philosophical viewpoint inevitably results in (or creates) an antithesis to it. Now we have a polarized society, or, expressed another way, a fragmented one. And, since "taking sides" on issues has been occurring for so long in our history, finally we, as a functioning society, have become solidly conditioned into this oppositional, partisanship-oriented mind-set. This isn't an attempt to dodge the question. I believe that these concepts themselves (being self-evident or easily verifiable in any local newspaper), are the important "issues" for contemplation today. They point to areas we can agree on, and our survival in the 80's depends upon it. If, in clarifying that it's the areas of potential unity that must be stressed, logic does not suffice, the environmental mandate for establishing global cooperation cannot be mistaken. Therefore, in fact, the most important issue is this one of "issues." If polarization self-propagates, and society is "not working," then conversely, only by identifying and addressing unifying factors will we arrest the decline and "work" as a society.

Q. To what do you attribute the declining interest in public education, and correspondingly, the growing interest in private-sector alternatives?

In cases where the education is "interpersonal" and relevant, one's interest is spontaneously maintained. A person knows the difference when cheerful interaction and nurturing is occurring. Lack of discipline and boredom vanish. Consciousness is raised when the "banking method of education" is forgone for dialogue between equals. The "banking method" is the term coined by Freire for describing the usual procedure in education wherein the teacher "deposits" data "into" the students to be "withdrawn" at a later date. Considering "What's wrong with public education?" and the magnitude of the changes and cooperation required for any lasting remedy is a practical illustration of the intertwinings of "education" with sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, therapy, etc. "Comprehensivity" (ref. Fuller) is the relevant concept now.

Q. What is the "Nature - Humanity" curriculum?

It consists of items and topics that are "in accord" with nature, and survival-oriented. The Nature - Humanity curriculum is a term coined for those educational investigations and activities which, without any "outside interpretation," enable one to spontaneously discover that, in-

deed, there are natural laws at play in life. Humans, being in and of nature, can know this. On one level, one such principle might translate into something as simple as "poison poured into a given area eventually poisons that area." This isn't political; it's visceral. Leaving aside all issues, there is a body of educative material about humanity and nature which is inclusive of us all. The concepts presented in this paper are some examples. Another example includes the use of R. Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion Sky-Ocean Map. This invention is just one example of Fuller's "holistic design science" artifacts--one which powerfully illustrates Lewis Thomas's notion of Earth as a single cell. On this projection, the whole world's surface is viewable simultaneously--on a flat surface and with no distortion--and appears as a one-world island of unbroken contour in a one-world ocean. (Critical Path, p. 164.) A detailed explanation of the Nature - Humanity curriculum is the subject of another discussion. Teacher education is initially the critical area of concern.